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Donate used instruments at North Miami music school's festival - Seventy students will play a mix of classic rock, beat, funk and original compositions at a Dec. 10 festival hosted at the Gibson showroom in Miami. Those who bring a used instrument to donate to local music programs will get in for free.

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Students at Live! Modern School of Music in North Miami are in the midst of rehearsing for their first-annual Live Music Festival. While every student is excited for their debut in the spotlight, giving hope to young artists and restoring music programs in Miami-Dade schools is the purpose of their performance.

"I am doing this for the purpose of trying to promote the network of young musicians," said Juan Diaz, director of Live! Modern School of Music. "We have an end of the year concert every year, but this is the first time having this festival."

The festival will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 10 at the Gibson Showroom at 2751 N. Miami Ave. Gibson is a big supporter of the school and loans instruments for the children to use. Seventy students ages 8-18 will be playing a mix of classic rock, beat, funk and even original compositions.

Local bands, consisting of past students, will also be included in the program.

Mark Meneses, an alumnus of the school, will be playing guitar with his band.

"Ever since this school started, students have started great local bands," Meneses said. "I believe the purpose of the show is not only to teach students musicianship and how to make a band work, but also raising awareness about the failing arts programs in the schools."

Diaz agrees and is giving anyone who brings an old instrument four free tickets into the show; otherwise, the cost is \$5 a person. These instruments help benefit a charity that was started in February by one of Diaz's students, Ben Dietch.

Dietch, a sixth grader at Nautilus Middle School in North Miami Beach, started this charity in order to collect old instruments, restore them and donate them to children in need. So far, his startup charity, which is now in collaboration with Live!, has helped restart the band program at Richmond Heights Middle School.

Dietch said Music for Memories recently received donations of a trumpet, keyboards, guitars, and a piano. The next school in line to receive the donations is Horace Mann Middle School. He also said there is a great need for orchestra instruments, and is hoping to receive

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generous donations the music festival.

"I'm as excited as a person can be," Dietch said. "In the beginning I thought we would just get a few instruments every month, but now it's booming and we're getting more."

At the end of the students' performances, they each will place their thumbprint on a wall to leave their mark.

"I think the show will really give them a sense of what they can accomplish," Meneses said. "Being able to take what you learn in a classroom and perform that on stage proves that."

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